

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS STATE 123231

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EGEN, CA

SUBJECT: ALASKAN GAS PIPELINE DECISION

REF: OTTAWA 3841

1. DEPT. HAS RECEIVED FOLLOWING TELEGRAM DATED MAY 25
ADDRESSED TO SECRETARY VANCE FROM SENATOR TED STEVENS:

2. BEGIN QUOTE --

AM GREATLY CONCERNED THAT OUR AMBASSADOR IN CANADA, TOM
ENDERS, IS APPARENTLY MAKING POLICY ON HIS OWN WITH RESPECT
TO THE ALL-ALASKAN NATURAL GAS PIPELINE AND ITS TWO COMPET-
ING TRANS-CANADIAN ALTERNATIVES. I RECENTLY READ IN THE
MONTREAL STAR OF MAY 12, 1977, THAT MR. ENDERS SAID THE
U.S. GOVERNMENT PREFERS AN OVERLAND ROUTE FOR MOVING THE
GAS SOUTH, RATHER THAN A SEA ROUTE (ALL ALASKAN ROUTE).

YOU MAY RECALL, CONGRESS ENACTED A LAW (PL 94-586) WHICH
ESTABLISHED PROCEDURE WHEREIN THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED
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STATES WILL MAKE THIS DECISION HIMSELF. MOREOVER, THE
ALASKA NATURAL GAS TRANSPORTATION ACT OF 1976 PROVIDES THAT
HE SHOULD NOT ISSUE A DECISION UNTIL AFTER JULY 1, 1977, AT
THE EARLIEST WHEN HE HAS FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AGENCY REPORTS

IN HAND.

MR. ENDERS HAS ALSO APPARENTLY COMMENTED THAT THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT MAY MAKE AN INTERIM DECISION ABOUT THE GAS TRANSMISSION BY SEPTEMBER 1, BUT THAT A FINAL DECISION WILL WAIT UNTIL THE END OF THE YEAR. I HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO BE PRESENT WHEN THE PRESIDENT PERSONALLY DISCUSSED THE SEPTEMBER 1 DATE. HE SAID THAT A FINAL DECISION WOULD BE MADE BY SEPTEMBER 1, AS PRESCRIBED BY LAW, AND THAT HE HAS NO INTENTION TO POSTPONE IT. MR. ENDER'S PUBLIC STATEMENT IN THIS REGARD IS MOST DISTRESSING FOR OBVIOUS REASONS. I SOON WILL BE ATTENDING THE U.S.-CANADIAN INTERPARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE IN VICTORIA. I FIND THAT THE UNITED STATES DELEGATION HAS NOW BEEN PLACED IN A RATHER COMPROMISING POSITION BY ITS OWN AMBASSADOR. I WOULD HOPE THAT I WILL NOT HAVE TO SPEND THE BETTER PART OF MY TIME IN VICTORIA EXPLAINING TO MEMBERS OF THE CANADIAN PARLIAMENT THAT MR. ENDERS SPEAKS ONLY FOR HIMSELF IN THIS MATTER AND NOT FOR THE U.S. GOVERNMENT. I THOUGHT THAT MY TIME IN VICTORIA MIGHT BE BETTER SPENT EXPLAINING THAT THIS WAS A PRESIDENTIAL DECISION SUBJECT TO CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL AND NOT A DECISION TO BE MADE ON THE AMBASSADORIAL LEVEL. YOUR COMMENTS WOULD BE MOST APPRECIATED.

TED STEVENS. -- END QUOTE.

3. DEPT. ASSUMES MONTREAL STAR ARTICLE OF MAY 12, WHICH WE HAVE NOT SEEN, REFERS TO AMBASSADOR'S REMARKS IN OTTAWA REPORTED REFTEL. IN REPLYING TO SENATOR STEVENS WE PROPOSE TO SAY THAT (A) AMBASSADOR SAID THAT FPC HAS UNCLASSIFIED

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RECOMMENDED OVERLAND ROUTE IF CANADA CHOOSES TO MAKE IT AVAILABLE, NOT THAT USG PREFERS OVERLAND ROUTE; (B) AMBASSADOR MADE IT CLEAR THAT PRESIDENT WILL MAKE HIS DECISION ON BASIS OF ALL RELEVANT FACTORS, NOT JUST FPC RECOMMENDATION; (C) AMBASSADOR SAID PRESIDENT HAS OPTION OF EXTENDING DECISION DEADLINE BEYOND SEPTEMBER 1, BUT AT THIS POINT THERE IS NO INDICATION HE INTENDS TO DO SO. FINAL CONGRESSIONAL ACTION WOULD COME 60 DAYS LATER.

4. WOULD APPRECIATE EMBASSY COMMENTS ON PROPOSED RESPONSE.

VANCE

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Disposition Case Number: n/a
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Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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